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MAHARAJA RANJIT SINGH HIS IMAGE AND INFLUENCE AT HOME AND ABROAD

(Based Mostly on Eye-witness Accounts)

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Maharaja Ranjit Singh

His Image and Influence at Home and Abroad
(Based Mostly on Eye-Witness Accounts)

Dr. Harnam Singh Shan

Maharaja Ranjit Singh became a legendary figure both at home and abroad during his own life-time.

He is widely acclaimed and is justly called Sher-i-Punjab, the Lion of Punjab, in his homeland, the Land of the Five Rivers. Describing his popular image and continuing influence in its Pakistani part, Faquir Waheed-ud-din, a learned descendant of the Maharaja's foreign minister, Faqir Aziz-ud-din, has recently stated, "Ranjit Singh still lives, large as life, in the imagination of the people. He does so not only where the Sikhs now live (i.e. in its Indian part), but also where they lived before (i.e. in its Pakistani part); for, the Muslim village-folk shared him as a legendary figure with the Sikhs and they have not let him depart with the latter...Ranjit Singh's popular image is that of a kindly patriarch, rather than that of a conquering hero or a mighty monarch. He was all three, but his humanity has out-lived his splendour and power."¹

Miss Emily Eden, an eminent writer and artist of his times, who accompanied her brother, Lord Auckland, the then Governor-General of the British India, on his visit to the Maharaja in 1838, wrote soon after to her sister in London about him in almost similar terms: "He has made himself a great King; he conquered a great many powerful enemies; he is remarkably just in his government; he has disciplined a large army; he hardly ever takes

1. Waheed-ud-din, Faqir Sayyed, *The Real Ranjit Singh*, Karachi-1965, p. 8.

away life, which is wonderful in a despot: and he is excessively beloved by his people. There is something rather touching in the affection his people have for him. It struck us all."²

2

For such other Westerners, too, who happened to see or know him from close quarters and who have also recorded their observations and impressions in their respective chronicles, travelogues, correspondence, reports and histories, etc., such as the following, Maharaja Ranjit Singh was "an exceptional", "an unique" and "an extraordinary man". According to the

1. SPECIAL ENVOYS OF SOME EUROPEAN KINGS, e.g.

1. Great Britain's King William's Sir Alexander Burnes, in his travelogue (1831-1833) :

"Ranjit Singh is, in every respect, an extraordinary character. I have heard his French Officers observe that he has no equal from Constantinople (Turkey) to India; and all of them have seen the immediate powers.....I have never quitted the presence of native of India with such impression as I left this man. Without education and without a guide, he conducts all the affairs of his kingdom with surprising energy and vigour."³

2. France's Victor Jacquement in his letters to Paris (1829-1831) :

"Ranjit Singh is a monarch absolutely independent and

2. Eden, Miss Emily, Up the Country : Letters written to her sister from the Upper Provinces of India, London-1866, vol. I, pp. 298-99.

3. Burness, Sir Alexander, Travels into Bukhara, being the narrative of a journey from India to Cabool...also narrative of a voyage on the Indus from Sea to Lahore with presents from the king of Great Britain, performed under the orders of the Government of India in 1831-33. London-1834, vol. I, pp. 33-140.

possessing the greatest power in Asia after the British... He is a Bonaparte (Napolean) in miniature. His conversation is like a nightmare. He is almost the first inquisitive Indian. I have seen; and his curiosity balances the apathy of the whole of his nation...The most skilful of our diplomats is a complete simpleton before him."⁴

II. SOME EUROPEAN KINGS AND THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF BRITISH INDIA ALSO SOUGHT AND CHERISHED HIS FRIENDSHIP FOR INSTANCE,

1. Alexander Czar, Emperor of Russia in his letter dated 1821 : "The traders of the Panjab will be well received on the Russian dominions....The Emperor is especially the well-wisher of the country reigned over by the King of the Sikhs."⁵

2. Loui Phillio King of France, in his letter dated 27 Oct., 1835 : "Although long distances and oceans part the kingdom of the Panjab from that of France, this is no bar to the love that binds our hearts together."⁶

3. Lord Auckland, Governor-General of British India (1836-1842) : "Ranjit Singh is the most powerful and valuable of our friends...By the blessings of prudence, the English and the Sikh nation will be united to the end of time."⁷

4. Jacquemont, Victor, Letters from India describing a journey in the British dominions in India, Tibet and Cashmere during the years 1829-31, undertaken by the order of the French Government, London-1834, vol. II, pp. 22, 139; vol. I, p. 251.

5. Moorcroft, Dr. W. and Trebech, G., Travels in the Himalayan Province of Hindustan and the Panjab, in Ladakh and Kashmir, etc from 1819-1825, London-1837, vol. I, pp. 383-387.

6. Preserved in original in the Commonwealth (formerly India Office) Library & Records, London; National Archives of India, New Delhi also preserves his letter dated 9 October, 1837.

7. Auckland's Minute, dated 12 May, 1838.

His friendship, help and advice was similarly sought and valued by the rulers of some Indian States and the neighbouring countries. Captain J.S. Cunningham, the inimitable historian of the time, surveying the contemporary scene and his impact and influence in 1831, tells us, "The fame of Ranjit Singh was now at its height, and his friendship was sought by distant sovereigns. In 1829, agents from Baluchistan brought horses to the Sikh ruler, and hoped that the frontier posts of Harrand and Dajal, Westward of the Indus, which the feudatory of Bahawalpur had usurped, would be restored to the Khan. The Maharaja was likewise in communication with Shah Mahmud of Herat; and in 1830 he was invited by the Baiza Bai of Gwalior to honour the nuptials of the young Sindhia with his presence. The English were at the same time not without a suspicion that he had opened a correspondence with Russia, and they were themselves about to flatter him, as one necessary to the fulfilment of their expanding views of just influence and profitable commerce."⁸ Again in 1838, a year before the Maharaja's death, he adds, "Ostensibly Ranjit Singh had reached the summit of his ambition: he was acknowledged to be an arbiter in the fate of that empire which had tyrannized over his peasant forefathers, and he was treated with the greatest distinction by the foreign paramounts of India."⁹

As far as the native rulers were concerned, the paramounts of Marathas and Rohilas, Jaswant Rai Hoolker and Amir Khan, respectively, had rushed to Amritsar, his summer capital, in 1805 to seek his refuge from the onslaughts of the paramounts of the East India Company.¹⁰ Apa Sahib, the ruler of Nagpur, had

8. Cunningham, Captain J.D., *A History of the Sikhs from the Origin of the Nation to the Battles of the Sutlej*, London-1849, pp. 172-173.

9. Cunningham, *The History of the Sikhs*, London-1849, p. 199.

10. University of Punjab Lahore, mss. no. 408, Mohan Singh, D.L., *A History of Panjabi Literature*, Lahore 1932, 3rd ed., Jalandhar 1971, p. 129.

similarly arrived in 1820 at Amritsar to seek his help from the impending assault of the British Forces.¹¹ Amar Singh Thapa of Nepal also sought his friendship¹², sent in 1825 his envoy to his court at Lahore¹³ and presented two elephants to him in 1836 as token of strengthening his friendship.¹⁴ He has been having secret correspondence with the Rajas of Rajasthan.¹⁵ such as of Jodhpur and Marwar, as is evident from his letter dated 25 December, 1822, addressed to Raja Man Singh regarding the request of Raja Randhir Singh of Bharatpur who was being threatened by the Britishers to dethrone him.¹⁶ Darvesh Muhammad, the Nizam of Hyderabad, Presented him through his envoy, 4 beautiful horses, a diamond-studded sword, an excellent gun and a highly precious and extremely embellished canopy in 1826 to establish friendly relations with him.

3

Some British Generals and other army officers who dealt with him, his administration and army have also left indelible impressions and opinions about the qualities of his head and heart, his achievements and influence. For instance, according to

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11. Elliot's letter to Murray dt. 17 June 1824-*Proceeding*, op. cit., p.c. 24: 115- Moorcraft, *Travels in the Panjab*.....op. cit. Pt. 1, p. 66.
 12. Garrett, H.L.O. & Chopra, Dr. G.L., *Events of the Court of Ranjit Singh*, Lahore-1935, p.
 13. Tickell, *Events at the Court of Nepal*, *Foreign Secret Consultations* (I), dt. 18 January 1841, No. 74.
 14. Macnottan's letter to Capt. Wade dt. 17 April 1838-*Proceedings*, op. cit., 121:36, p. 504.
 15. *Index to Proceedings*, op. cit., PC, No. 40-41, 14-14-a, 149-150, etc.
 16. Tripathi, Prof. L.K. & Har Dayal Singh (ed.), *The Maharaja Ranjit Singh Centenary Volume*, Cawnpore-1940, pp. 121-128.

1. General Sir Charles Gough :

"Ranjit Singh was an exceptional man.....He possessed precisely the necessary qualities. His prowess was beyond question; the vigour and stewardness of his judgement were conspicuous; his promptitude of action was obvious...He possessed in a very high degree one particular kingly quality not usually conspicuous in oriental monarchs-he always knew exactly how far he could go. However large and far-reaching his ultimate designs might be, his immediate measures were always practicable. He made each step secure before he took the next...."¹⁷

2. General Sir John Gordon :

"Ranjit Singh was a unique personality...."¹⁸

3. Colonel Alexander Gardner :

"The Maharaja was, indeed, one of the master-minds which only require opportunity to change the face of the globe..."¹⁹

4. Captain W.G. Osborne, Military Secretary to the Governor-General

"Ranjit Singh cannot fail to strike everyone as that of a very extra-ordinary man....The more I see of him, the more he strikes me as an extra-ordinary man...."

"He was one of that order of minds which seem destined by nature to win their way to distinction and achieve greatness...Perfectly uneducated, unable even to read or write, he has by his own natural and unassisted intellect raised himself from the situation of a private individual to that of a despotic monarch over a turbulent and powerful nation. By sheer force of mind, personal energy, and courage...he established his throne

17. Gough and Innes, *The Sikhs and the Sikh Wars*, London-1897, p. 29.

18. Gordon, *The Sikhs*, London-1904, p. 110.

19. Pearse, *Memoirs of Alexander Gardner*, op. cit., p. 180.

on a firmer foundation than that of any other eastern sovereign; and but for the watchful jealousy of the British Government, would long ere this have added Sind, if not Afghanistan, to his present kingdom."

"His character was that of a generous and liberal master; and it was his custom to go into action with his arms covered with golden bracelets, and to reward with a pair of them any act of personal courage on the part of his soldiers which might happen to meet his observation."²⁰

5. Captain L.V. Orlich :

"In battle, he was always seen at the head of his troops and foremost in combat; he twice crossed the Indus with his cavalry in the face of the enemy, and gained the victory. In energy of will and endurance, he was unequalled by any of his people."²¹

"With all the magnificence which prevailed at his court, he was himself very simple in his attire, and wore but few ornaments; but he loved to see show and splendour in everything about him."²²

6. Dr. W.L., M' Gregar :

"It is evident that he is no common character, but possessed of powers of mind rarely met with either in the Eastern or the Western World,"

"There is no instance of his being embarrassed or evincing anything like fear."²³

20. Osborne, *The Court and Camp of Runjeet Singh*. London-1840, p. 32.

21. Orlich, Capt. Leopold von, *Travels in India, including Sindh and the Punjab*, London-1845, vol. I, p. 172.

22. *Ibid*: p. 171.

23. M'Gregor, Dr. W.L., *The History of the Sikhs, containing the Lives of the Gooroos; the History of the Independent Sirdars or Misals and the life of the Great Founder of the Sikh Monarchy, Maharajan Ranjeet Singh*, London-1846, pp.215-280.

7. **T.H. Thornton :**

"Runjeet Singh has been likened to Mehmet Ali and to Napoleon. Mr. Jacquemont terms him a 'Bonaparte in Miniature'. There are some points in which he resembles both; but estimating his character with reference to his circumstances and position, he is, perhaps, a more remarkable man than either."²⁴

8. **Sir Lepel Griffin :**

"He was a born ruler, with the natural genius for command. Men obeyed him by instinct...The control which he exercised, even in the closing years of his life, over the whole Sikh people, nobles, priests and people was the measure of his greatness."²⁵

4

The name and fame of Maharaja Ranjit Singh had spread far and wide to such an extent that it attracted a number of adventurous foreigners to visit his empire and see him personally.

Von Baron Charles Hugel, the first-ever traveller who came to India from Australia during his reign, has himself stated in his travelogue, published in 1845: "In Europe I had heard of the most powerful Maharaja of Lahore; who... not only afforded protection to travellers visiting Panjab but received them with distinction at his court...Upon my arrival in Hindustan, the accounts which I had heard in the course of my travels...were not only confirmed, but proved to me to be much stranger than I had even imagined...From the Maharaja I experienced not only the protection and munificence becoming a great king, but his kindness has also

24. Thornton, T.H. History of the Panjab, and of the Rise and Progress and Present Condition of the Sect and Nation of the Sikhs. London-1846. Vol. II, p. 174.

25. Griffin, Ranjit Singh, Oxford-1905, pp. 91-92.

left a lasting impression on me."²⁶

He also tells us that he was very keen to see the legendary Maharaja: his well-known general, S. Hari Singh Nalwa, his famous horse, Laili; and his matchless diamond, Koh-i-Noor all by himself, with his own eyes.

The Jewish-turned-Christian missionary, Dr. Joseph Wolff, came also on a somewhat similar mission during 1831-1832. According to him, "Rundjut Singh has proved to the Mussulmans pretty well that the edge of the sword is not always evidence of the truth of religion; for, the name of Rundjut Singh, is a terror from Lahore to the city of Bokhara-his sword having defeated the Mohammedans in every battle."²⁷

5

They and some more British officers stationed at the East India Company's Residency in Delhi and Agency at Ludhiana have also recorded their first-hand information and have, in addition given graphic accounts of the Maharaja's Kingdom, army, court and some distinguishing traits of his personality.

About his kingdom, Major Lawrence has provided us with Maharaja's own statement dated 5 May, 1830, claiming that "My kingdom is a great kingdom. It was small, it is now large; it was scattered, broken, and divided, it is now consolidated...Its territory now extends to the borders of Chin (China) and the limits of the Afghans, with all Multan and the rich possessions beyond the Sutlej."²⁸

26. Hugel, Von Baron Charles, *Travels in Kashmir and the Punjab, containing a Particular Account of the Government and Character of the Sikhs*, London-1845, p. 315.

27. Wolff, *Travels and Adventures*, London, 1860-61, pp. 68-69.

28. Lawrence, *Adventures of an Officer in the Punjab, in the service of Ranjit Singh*, London-1846; vol. I, p. 63.

British General Gough has called it a unique phenomenon in history.²⁹ According to the Austrian traveller Hugel, "The kingdom founded by Ranjit Singh, who, like a skilful architect, has formed of so many insignificant unpromising fragments one majestic fabric, seemed to me the most wonderful object in the whole world."³⁰

About its glory and further expansion, the historian John Marshman tells us, "It was his extraordinary talent alone which reared the edifice of Sikh greatness, and if he had not been hemmed in by the irresistible power of the Company, he would undoubtedly have established a new and magnificent empire in Hindoostan. He succeeded to the leadership of his tribe at the early age of seventeen, when the Punjab was distracted by the conflicts of its various independent chieftains. He left it a compact of its various independent chieftains. He left it a compact and powerful kingdom, strengthened by the annexation of some of the richest Provinces of the Dooranian Empire."³¹ Colonel Gardner and Geographer Vigne have also vouchsafed the veracity of this observation by stating in their respective memories :

1. "Ranjit Singh...would have carried his conquests to Delhi or even farther, had it not been for the simultaneous rise and consolidation of the British empire in India."³²

29. Gough, Genl. Sir C. & Innes, A.D., *The Sikhs and the Sikh Wars, the Rise Conquest, and Annexation of the Punjab State*, London-1897; p.41.

30. Hugel, *Travels in Cashmere and in the Punjab, containing a Particular Account of the Government and Character of the Sikhs*, London-1845, pp. 293-94.

31. Marshman, J.C., *History of India from the Earliest Period of the Close of Lord Dalhousie's Administration*, London-1857, Vol. I, p. 39.

32. Pearse, H. (ed.), *Soldier and Traveller: The Memories of Alexander Gardner*, London-1898, p. 180.

2. "If he had not been restrained by the gigantic power of the East India Company, Runjit Singh would long ago have been seated on the throne of Delhi."³³

As regards the Afghans and Afghanistan which have now become the burning problem of the entire world, Ranjit Singh dealt a severe blow to them and their onslaughts almost soon after his taking over the reins of Lahore. So much so that Mr. Collins, the then British Resident at Delhi wrote, as follows, on 16 October 1800 to his Governor-General at Calcutta :

"At present, this chief is regarded throughout Hindustan as the protector of the Sikh nation; it being generally believed that were it not for the fortitude and excellent conduct of Ranjit Singh, the whole of the Punjab would ere this have become a desert-waste, since it is the boast of these northern savages (i.e. the Afghans) that the grass never grows where their horses have once trodden."³⁴

Shah Zaman, their ruler of the day, sought during that very year Maharaja's friendship by sending precious presents to him. Later, in 1811, he sought his refuge at Lahore when he had to quit Kabul. The liberal and kind-hearted Maharaja welcomed and helped him accordingly.³⁵ Regarding the annexation of its entire territory to the Maharaja's Kingdom, Jacquemont, the French envoy, wrote in 1830 to his government at Paris in these very words :

33. Vigne, G L., *Travels in Kashmir, Ladak, Iskardo, the Countries adjoining the mountain course of the Indus and the Himalayas, North of the Punjab*. London-1844, vol. II, p. 421.

34. National Archives of India, New Delhi, Secret Correspondence, 4 of 16 October 1800.

35. Suri, Munshi Sohan Lal, *Umda-tu-Tawarikh*, Lahore-1885, daftar 2, p. 143; National Archives of India, New Delhi, Political Correspondence, 74 of 24 April, 1800.

"Should Ranjit Singh think he could prudently absent himself for sometime from the Panjab, nothing would be easier for him than to reconquer the whole of Afghanistan."³⁶

6

They and some other foreigners have also all praise for the army of his great kingdom. "By indefatigable exertions", says Marshman, "by the adoption of every improvement he could hear of, and by incessant and successful expeditions, he succeeded in creating an army of 80,000 strong with 300 pieces of cannon, superior in discipline, colour and equipment to any force which had ever been in India under native colours."³⁷

Recording his observation about his artillery on 22 June 1838, Auckland's Military Secretary, Captain Osborne, remarked: "He is very proud of the efficiency and admirable condition of his artillery; and justly so, for no Indian Power has yet possessed so large and well-discipline a corps."³⁸

Similarly, about his cavalry the Austrian traveller, Baron Hugel, wrote on 21 January, 1836 in his travelogue, "I requested leave to inspect them (the Ghorcharhas), and never beheld a finer nor a more remarkably-striking body of men."³⁹

36. Jacquemont, V. Letters from India describing a Journey in the British Dominions of India, Tibet and Cashmere during the years 1829-31, undertaken by the order of French Government London-1834, Vol II, p. 139; Osborne, The Court and Camp of Ranjit Singh, London, 1840, p. 37.

37. Marshman, J.C., History of India from the earliest period to the close of Lord Dalhousie's Administration, London 1863, Vol. III, pp. 32-33.

38. Osborne, The Court and Camp of Ranjit Singh, London 1840, in date 22 June 1838, p. 60.

39. Hugel, Travels in Cashmere and the Panjab, London-1845, pp. 130-331.

Major Smyth, a senior officer of the British Agency at Ludhiana, went to the extent of stating in his chronicle; "It is a force such as no Eastern power had ever possessed."⁴⁰

According to General Gough who commanded the British forces in the Anglo-Sikh wars and wrote about those, "The Sikh army was the most efficient, the hardest to overcome, that we have ever faced in India."⁴¹

John Lawrence described it as a "formidable army which", according to him "was the Sikh people in arms, a militant incarnation of their religion."⁴²

Writing about its soldiers, General Garden tells us, "They were devotedly attached to him, all feeling under his command the exhilarating effects of confident success...He was at home in the saddle and in camp among his soldiers, taking his meals in their presence."⁴³

A German army officer, Lt. Col. Steinbach, communicating his impression about the court of Ranjit Singh, has asserted, "it contained all that the imagination can conceive of human grandeur, all that the most exuberant fancy can derive in endeavour to portray the acme of royal splendour...It is doubtful if any court in Europe possesses such valuable jewels as the Court of Lahore."⁴⁴

Reporting about its discipline, decorum and manners to the Governor-General; Calcutta Captain Wade, the Political Assistant of the East India Company at Ludhiana from 1823 to 1846,

40. Smyth, Major G.C., *A History of the Reigning Family of Lahore with some account of the Jummoo Rajahs, the Seik Soldiers and their Sirdars*, London-1847, p. xxv.

41. Gough & Innes, *The Sikhs and the Sikh Wars*, London-1897, p. 43.

42. Lawrence, John & Woodwisp, Audrey (ed.), *The Journals of Honoria Lawrence: India Observed 1837-1854*, London-1904, pp. 111-112.

43. Gordon, Genl. Sir J.H., *The Sikhs*, London-1904, pp. 111-112.

44. Steinbach, Lt. Col., *The Patiala being a Brief Account of the Country of the Sikhs*, London, 2nd ed.-1846, pp. 16-17.

wrote as follows on 1st August 1827 : "it was impossible not to admire the order and regularity of the whole assembly, the deference with which the Sardars treated the Maharaja and the courtesy they observed towards each other. There was no rude familiarity and confusion, everyone seemed to know his place and to be conscious of the station he filled."⁴⁵

8

Mentioning the very basis and source of the formation of that kingdom, its camp and court, its image and influence at home and abroad, Captain Crowther maintained as under in his memorandum to the Government of India : "One master-hand character, however, was destined to confine the several confederacies into one power in the person of Ranjit Singh. He had united by the force of personal character, the military ardour of a sect with their religious enthusiasm, and formed an empire."⁴⁶

One distinguishing trait of the personal character of Maharaja Ranjit Singh has been his humanity or tenderness for life which attracted the attention of all and received universal approbation both at home and abroad.

Captain H.E. Fane, Adjutant of Sir Henry Fane, the then Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in India, who accompanied him during the latter's visit to Panjab in 1837, has mentioned it thus in his diary record : "Ranjeet among his subjects has the character generally of a kind and generous master, and one of the best princes that has ever reigned in India. As evidence of his being a really good and amiable man, may be cited his

45. Letter from Captain C M. Wade, Political Assistant, Ludhiana to Sir C.T. Metcalfe, Resident, etc., Ludhiana, dated 1.8.1927, letter no. 3, vol. 33 hence date of consultation 12-10-1827.

46. Crowther, Capt. R.L. Memorandum on the Sikhs, Government of India, Army Department, Calcutta-1894

kindness to children (two or three of whom he has seen crawling about the durbar), and the fact of his never having, since he conquered the country, put a man to death for even the most heinous crimes. At all events it is certain that, without the punishment of death, this chief yet manages to keep his wild people in perfect subjection."⁴⁷

Captain Murray, an officer of the East India Company's Agency at Ludhiana, for instance, tells us that "there is no instance of his having want-only imbued his hands in blood."⁴⁸

Henry Prinsep, another officer of the same Agency, has also maintained, "There is no ferocity in his disposition, and he has never taken life, even under circumstances of aggravated offence."⁴⁹

The Company's accredited doctor, M'Gregor, has also vouchsafed this fact stating, "He was an exception to Oriental monarchs, and never wantonly inflicted either capital punishment or mutilation."⁵⁰ So much so that, according to Captain Osborne, "Except in actual open warfare, he has never been known to take life, though his own has been attempted more than once."⁵¹

Such matchless traits of Ranjit Singh's personal character went a long way in bringing peace and harmony, progress and prosperity to Panjab, the Land of the Five Rivers. According to General Gordon, "Such order and security also reigned there as has never been known before."⁵²

47. Fane, Capt., H.E., *Five Years in India, 1835-1839*, London-1842: vol. I, pp. 95-96.

48. Murray, Captain H., *History of British India with continuation, from comprising...war in Panjab*, London-1856, p. 615.

49. Prinsep, H.T., *Origin of the Sikh Power in the Panjab and Political Life of Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, London-1834, p. 143.

50. M'Gregor, *History of the Sikhs*, op. cit., vol. I, p. 281.

51. Osborne, *The Court and Camp of Ranjeet Singh*, London-1840, p. 38.

52. A. Gordon, *The Sikhs*, op. cit., p. 118.

When such a "humane", "exceptional" and "extraordinary man". Ranjit Singh, passed away on 27 June 1839, Captain Osborne, Military Secretary of the Governor-General of the British India, who was then present at Lahore during his last days, stated as follows in his last despatch to the British authorities : "You have no idea of what a sensation his death has caused...So deep and sincere were the feelings with which he was universally regarded that to the last the most implicit obedience was paid to his commands, and (when he could no longer speak) to the signs by which his will was expressed."⁵³

Dr. Honighberger, an eye-witness, mentioning his funeral procession, described the horrible scene as under in his memoris:

"Our hearts throbbed at the view of the dismal train."⁵⁴

According to the English version by G.S. Sardesai of a Marathi News-letter, when his body was shown fire for its cremation, "the whole crowd that had assembled attempted to jump into his pyre, but were with difficulty prevented."⁵⁵

Writing his full-fledged biography, Sir Lepel Griffin observed even 65 years after that terrible event : "His name is still a household word in the province. His portrait is still preserved in castle and in cottage. It is a favourite subject with the ivory painters of Amritsar and Delhi."⁵⁶



53. Osborne, Capt. W.G., *The Court and Camp of Runjeet Singh*, London-1840, p. 81, 79.

54. Honighberger, Dr. J.M., *Thirty five years in the East : Experiments and Historical Sketches relating to the Punjab and Cashmere*, London-1852, p. 99.

55. M. Gregor, Dr. W.L., *The History of the Sikhs...and the Life of the Great Founder of the Sikh Monarchy, Maharaja Ranjit Singh*, London-1846, vol. II, p. 4.

56. Griffin, Sir Lepel, *Ranjit Singh*, Oxford-1905, p. 88.

ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਮਿਸ਼ਨ, ਪਟਿਆਲਾ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ

ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਇਕ ਪਰਉਪਕਾਰੀ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ 1963 ਵਿੱਚ ਕੁੱਝ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਸਿੱਖ ਹਸਤੀਆਂ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ, ਸਿੱਖੀ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਾਂ, ਸਿੱਖ ਨੈਤਿਕਤਾ, ਸਿੱਖ ਸੱਭਿਆਚਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਸਾਰੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਤੱਕ ਪਹੁੰਚਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਨੇ ਹੁਣ ਤੱਕ 519 ਅਜਿਹੀਆਂ ਪੁਸਤਕਾਵਾਂ (Tracts) ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਿਤ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ ਹਨ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਦੇ ਵੱਖ-ਵੱਖ ਪੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਪੱਸ਼ਟ ਰੂਪ ਵਿੱਚ ਉਜਾਗਰ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਉਪਰਾਲਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਤ ਕੇਵਲ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਨੂੰ ਹੀ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਿਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦੀ, ਸਗੋਂ ਸਿੱਖ-ਸਿਧਾਂਤਾਂ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਹੋਰ ਵੀ ਅਨੇਕਾਂ ਪਰਉਪਕਾਰੀ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਅਧੀਨ ਹੇਠ ਲਿਖੇ ਸੱਤ ਪਰਉਪਕਾਰੀ ਟਰੱਸਟ (Charitable Trusts) ਕੰਮ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ।

(1) ਅਕਾਲੀ ਫੁਲਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਯਾਦਗਾਰੀ ਟਰੱਸਟ (2) ਡਾ. ਗੰਡਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਯਾਦਗਾਰੀ ਟਰੱਸਟ (3) ਮਦਰ ਆਫ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਯਾਦਗਾਰੀ ਟਰੱਸਟ (4) ਗਿਆਨੀ ਕਰਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਯਾਦਗਾਰੀ ਟਰੱਸਟ (5) ਗਿਆਨੀ ਦਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਯਾਦਗਾਰੀ ਟਰੱਸਟ (6) ਭਗਤ ਲਛਮਣ ਸਿੰਘ ਯਾਦਗਾਰੀ ਟਰੱਸਟ (7) ਸ. ਨਰੈਣ ਸਿੰਘ ਯਾਦਗਾਰੀ ਟਰੱਸਟ

ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਵਰਣਨ ਕੰਮਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾ ਸਕੂਲਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਕਾਲਜਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਪੜ੍ਹ ਰਹੇ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਦੇਣ ਲਈ ਇਮਤਿਹਾਨ ਆਯੋਜਿਤ ਕੀਤੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਇਮਤਿਹਾਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਨ-ਪੱਤਰ (Question Papers) ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰੂਆਂ, ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਰਚਿਤ ਬਾਣੀ, ਸਿੱਖ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਆਦਿ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਇਮਤਿਹਾਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਤਿੰਨ ਸਥਾਨ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਲੇਖਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਨਾਮ ਵੀ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਅਜਿਹੀਆਂ ਕਾਰਜਸ਼ਾਲਾਵਾਂ (Workshops) ਦਾ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉੱਭਰ ਰਹੇ ਯੁਵਕ ਲੇਖਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮਾਹਿਰਾਂ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਲੋੜੀਂਦੀ ਸਿਖਲਾਈ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਕਾਲਜਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਪੜ੍ਹ ਰਹੇ ਲਾਇਕ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਵਜ਼ੀਫ਼ੇ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਲੋੜੀਂਦੀ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਦਾਨ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ।

ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਦੀ ਆਮਦਨ ਦੇ ਕੋਈ ਆਪਣੇ ਸੁਤੰਤਰ ਸਾਧਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਹਨ। ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਸੁਨੇਹੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਦੇ ਹਿਤੈਸ਼ੀਆਂ ਵਲੋਂ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਮਾਇਆ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਹੀ ਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਗਤੀਵਿਧੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਨਿਰੰਤਰ ਜਾਰੀ ਰੱਖ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਦੇ ਮੈਂਬਰਾਂ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਵਾਰਸ਼ਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਜੀਵਨ-ਪ੍ਰਯੋਤ ਚੰਦਾ ਹੀ ਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਦੀ ਆਮਦਨ ਦਾ ਮੁੱਖ ਸਾਧਨ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾ ਕੁਝ ਸ਼ਰਧਾਲੂ ਗੁਰਸਿੱਖ ਵੀ ਸਮੇਂ-ਸਮੇਂ ਤੇ ਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਦੀ ਮਾਲੀ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਕਰਦੇ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਪਿਛਲੇ ਸਾਲ ਸ਼੍ਰੋਮਣੀ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਨੇ ਵੀ ਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਦੀ ਮਾਲੀ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਸੀ। ਪਰ ਇਸਦੇ ਬਾਵਜੂਦ ਮੈਂ ਇਹ ਲਿਖਣ ਲਈ ਮਜਬੂਰ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਬਹੁ-ਪੱਖੀ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਗਤੀਵਿਧੀਆਂ ਜਾਰੀ

ਰੱਖਣ ਲਈ ਧਨ ਦੀ ਸਖਤ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ। ਪਿਛਲੇ ਕਈ ਸਾਲਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਦੇ ਖਰਚਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਕਾਫ਼ੀ ਜ਼ਿਆਦਾ ਵਾਧਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ। ਇਸਦਾ ਮੁੱਖ ਕਾਰਨ ਟ੍ਰੈਕਟ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਲੋੜੀਂਦੇ ਕਾਗਜ਼, ਛਪਾਈ ਅਤੇ ਡਾਕ ਖਰਚ ਵਿੱਚ ਬਹੁਤ ਹੀ ਜ਼ਿਆਦਾ ਵਾਧਾ ਹੋਣਾ ਹੈ। ਡਾਕ ਦਾ ਖਰਚ ਇਤਨਾ ਜ਼ਿਆਦਾ ਵੱਧ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਦੇ ਮੈਂਬਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਜਿਹੜਾ ਟ੍ਰੈਕਟ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਕੇਵਲ ਇੱਕ ਰੁਪਏ ਵਿੱਚ ਭੇਜਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਸੀ ਹੁਣ ਉਸ ਟ੍ਰੈਕਟ ਨੂੰ ਭੇਜਣ ਲਈ ਲਗਪਗ 4 ਰੁਪਏ ਖਰਚੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਹਰ ਖੇਤਰ ਵਿਚ ਮਹਿੰਗਾਈ ਕਾਫ਼ੀ ਜ਼ਿਆਦਾ ਵਧਣ ਦੇ ਕਾਰਣ ਹੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਦੇ ਸਮੁੱਚੇ ਖਰਚ ਵਿੱਚ ਕਾਫ਼ੀ ਜ਼ਿਆਦਾ ਵਾਧਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਕਾਰਨ ਮੈਂ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਸੁਨੇਹੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਦੇ ਹਿਤੈਸ਼ੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਨਿਮਰ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਕਰਦਾ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਵੱਧ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਗੁਰਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਦਾ ਮੈਂਬਰ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਅਤੇ ਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਨੂੰ ਮਾਲੀ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੇਣ ਦੀ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾਲਤਾ ਕਰਨ ਤਾਂ ਜੋ ਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਗਤੀਵਿਧੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਖੇਤਰ ਹੋਰ ਜ਼ਿਆਦਾ ਵਿਸ਼ਾਲ ਕਰ ਸਕੇ। ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਦਾ ਮੈਂਬਰ ਬਣਨ ਲਈ ਚੰਦਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਵੇਰਵਾ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਹੈ।

ਚੰਦਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਦਰ

ਭਾਰਤ

ਵਾਰਸ਼ਿਕ 35-00

ਜੀਵਨ-ਪ੍ਰਯੰਤ 350-00

ਵਿਦੇਸ਼

ਜੀਵਨ-ਪ੍ਰਯੰਤ 1000-00

ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਦੇ ਮੈਂਬਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਵਲੋਂ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਿਤ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ ਜਾਂਦੀਆਂ ਪੁਸਤਕਾਵਾਂ (Tracts) ਮੁਫ਼ਤ ਭੇਜੀਆਂ ਜਾਂਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ।

ਮੈਨੂੰ ਪੂਰਨ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਗੁਰਸਿੱਖ ਪਾਠਕ ਮੇਰੀ ਇਸ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਜ਼ਰੂਰ ਸਵੀਕਾਰ ਕਰਨਗੇ ਅਤੇ ਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਦੀ ਮਾਲੀ ਹਾਲਤ ਨੂੰ ਦ੍ਰਿੜ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਆਪਣਾ ਵਡਮੁੱਲਾ ਯੋਗਦਾਨ ਜ਼ਰੂਰ ਦੇਣਗੇ। ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਨੂੰ ਹਰ ਤਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਰਕਮ ਮਨੀਆਰਡਰ, ਚੈੱਕ ਜਾਂ ਬੈਂਕ ਡਰਾਫਟ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਭੇਜੀ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ। ਬੈਂਕ ਡਰਾਫਟ ਜਾਂ ਚੈੱਕ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਮਿਸ਼ਨ, ਪਟਿਆਲਾ ਦੇ ਨਾਮ ਤੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਬੈਂਕ ਦਾ ਭੇਜਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਡਾ. ਐਸ. ਐਸ. ਨੰਦਾ

Ph.D.

ਸਕੱਤਰ

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